

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Atlanta, Georgia

Profile of Drug Indicators

June 2003



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Atlanta, Georgia

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Population: 416,474 (2000 Census); 394,017 (1990 Census)
- Race/Ethnicity (2000 Census): 31.3% white; 61.0% black/African American; 0.1% American Indian/Alaska Native; 1.9% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.2% other race; 1.0% two or more races; 4.5% Hispanic/Latino (any race)
- The majority (93%) of the Atlanta population lives in Fulton County and the remainder of the population lives in DeKalb County.

Politics

- Mayor: Shirley Franklin²
- City Council Members (District): Cathy Woolard (Council President); Carla Smith (1); Debi Starnes (2); Ivory Lee Young (3); Cleta Winslow (4); Natalyn Archibong (5); Anne Fauver (6); Howard Shook (7); Clair Muller (8); Felicia Moore (9); Clarence Martin (10); Jim Maddox (11); Derrick Boazman (12); Ceasar Mitchell (Post 1 at large); Mary Norwood (Post 2 at large); H. Lamar Willis (Post 3 at large)³
- Atlanta Police Department Chief: Richard J. Pennington⁴
- Atlanta HIDTA Director: Ronald J. Caffrey⁵

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁶
Designated in 1995, the Atlanta HIDTA and is responsible for the city of Atlanta and Fulton and DeKalb Counties. As a major transportation hub of the United States, Atlanta is a consumer of and major transshipment center for cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and other dangerous drugs.
- Call to Manhood⁷
The Call to Manhood program is an anti-violence initiative targeting young black males in Atlanta and throughout Fulton County. The purpose of the program is to instill positive attitudes that will benefit the individual and society as a whole. Some aspects of the program are conflict resolution, drug/alcohol prevention, and educational and career opportunities.
- Unity Project⁸
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs and AID Atlanta developed the Unity Project to address HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. The goal of Unity Project is to reduce substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in African American youth and their parents living in the Atlanta area.

Federal Funding

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program grantees in Atlanta:⁹
 - FY 2001 and FY 2002: no Atlanta grantees
 - FY 2000: \$59,125 was awarded to the Genesis Prevention Coalition
 - FY 1999: no Atlanta grantees

- FY 1998: \$100,000 was awarded to the Wholistic Stress Control Institute
- Executive Office for Weed and Seed¹⁰
The Pittsburgh/Mechanicsville areas of Atlanta have been officially recognized and received Federal funding as a Weed and Seed site.
- Atlanta did not receive any funding through the FY 2002 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Grant Program.¹¹
- Atlanta did not receive any methamphetamine funding in 2002 from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.¹²
- FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant amount received in Atlanta:¹³
 - \$200,000 to the Bedford Pines Apartments
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) FY 2001 Discretionary Funds received in Atlanta:¹⁴
 - Center for Mental Health Services:
 - \$70,000 to Georgia Parent Support Network. Project period: 9/30/01-9/29/04
 - \$100,000 to the Georgia Department of Human Resources. Project period: 9/30/01-9/29/04
 - \$8,967 to Emory University. Project period: 9/01/98-8/31/02
 - \$1,335,439 to Emory University. Project period: 9/30/01-9/29/06
 - \$400,000 to Positive Impact, Inc. Project period: 9/30/01-9/29/06
 - Center for Substance Abuse Prevention:
 - \$372,407 to Emory University. Project period: 9/30/99-9/29/02
 - \$238,585 to Morehouse School of Medicine. Project period: 9/30/99-9/29/02
 - \$326,401 to Health Outreach Project, Inc. Project period: 9/30/99-9/29/02
 - Center for Substance Abuse Treatment:
 - \$199,531 to Recovery Consultants of Atlanta, Inc. Project period: 9/30/01-9/29/06
 - \$599,940 to Fulton County Board of Commissioners. Project period: 9/30/01-9/29/04
 - \$345,522 to Morehouse School of Medicine. Project period: 9/30/00-9/29/03
 - \$421,800 to Georgia Department of Human Resource. Project period: 9/30/99-9/29/02
 - \$400,000 to Health Outreach Project. Project period: 9/30/99-9/29/02
 - \$61,000 to Morehouse School of Medicine. Project period: 9/30/98-9/31/01
- FY 2002 Office of Justice Programs and Community Oriented Policing Services grant amounts for Atlanta:¹⁵
 - \$98,886,284 in discretionary funds
 - \$46,473,374 in formula funds

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- During the first four months of 2003, there were 45 homicides reported to the Atlanta Police Department.¹⁶ There were 151 homicides reported in full year 2002 and 144 homicides reported in full year 2001.¹⁷

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, Atlanta, 2001-April 2003

Offense	Full Year 2001	Full Year 2002	Jan.-April 2003
Criminal homicide	144	151	45
Rape	367	276	89
Robbery	4,341	4,168	1,238
Aggravated assault	5,956	5,373	1,318
Burglary	8,731	8,554	2,563
Larceny	25,721	23,706	7,505
Auto theft	6,935	7,222	2,201
Total	52,195	49,450	14,959

- Preliminary data for 2002 indicate that 70.7% of adult male arrestees in Atlanta tested positive for at least one of the following drugs at arrest: cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or methamphetamine.¹⁸

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Testing Positive, Atlanta, 2002

Drug Type	Percent Positive
Cocaine	49.4%
Heroin	3.4
Marijuana	35.2
Methamphetamine	2.1
Any of above drugs	70.7
Multiple drugs	18.1

- Additional Atlanta arrestee drug use data for 2002 indicate that half of the adult male arrestees used marijuana within the past year. Among those reporting past year marijuana use, the average number of days the drug was used in the past month was 9.9 days.¹⁹

Past Drug Use Among Adult Male Arrestees, Atlanta, 2002

Drug Type	Past 7 Days	Past 30 Days	Past Year	Avg. # Days
Crack cocaine	26.4%	27.8%	29.6%	11.0 days
Powder cocaine	9.1	12.2	17.0	4.6 days
Marijuana	37.4	42.6	50.0	9.9 days
Methamphetamine	1.9	2.4	4.4	3.9 days
Heroin	1.7	1.8	2.5	10.9 days

Drugs

- Cocaine
Cocaine (in all forms) is the most regularly encountered drug by local and Federal law enforcement in Atlanta.²⁰ Many Atlanta users who report that cocaine is their drug of choice are experimenting with ecstasy.²¹ The average price for a gram of powder and a gram of crack cocaine is \$100 for each, with purity levels ranging from

50-80%. The average price for a rock of crack is approximately \$10-\$20. However, sometimes \$5, \$3, and even \$1 rocks are sold to boost sales. Some crack users begin to use heroin as a means to manage their crack use.²²

➤ Heroin

South American heroin is the dominant type found in Atlanta. In the first half of 2001, the price of heroin per milligram pure sampled by the DEA dropped slightly to \$1.10, from \$1.15 in 2000. The average purity per sample in Atlanta rose from 47.6% in 2000 to 55.7% in the first half of 2001.²³

➤ Marijuana

Marijuana remains the most widely abused drug in Atlanta. Because of its high profitability and the lack of prosecution following arrest, it continues to be of concern to area law enforcement.²⁴ Some young marijuana users mix small amounts of cocaine with marijuana.²⁵ The average price of marijuana in Atlanta is \$930/pound.²⁶

➤ Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is the second largest threat in metropolitan Atlanta (behind cocaine).²⁷ Some MDMA users report that they have developed a tolerance to MDMA, causing them to move on to methamphetamine to achieve a stronger, longer-lasting high.²⁸ Many Atlanta law enforcement personnel link the continued rise of methamphetamine availability with the rise in migrant Hispanic workers. The price of methamphetamine in the Atlanta area ranges from \$8,000 to \$20,000 per pound, \$100 per gram, \$200-\$275 per eightball (1/8 ounce), and \$1,500 per ounce. The purity level for methamphetamine imported into the Atlanta area is 11%.²⁹

➤ Club Drugs

MDMA is readily available in Atlanta nightclubs.³⁰ MDMA pills in Atlanta have been shown to contain dextromethorphan and methamphetamine.³¹ Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and ketamine are additional club drugs identified as drugs of concern for Atlanta law enforcement.³² The average price of a dose of MDMA is approximately \$20. The cost per dosage unit for GHB is \$10-\$20, and the cost per dosage unit of Rohypnol is \$5-\$10. LSD dosage units sell for \$4-\$10 retail and approximately \$1 wholesale.³³

➤ Other Drugs

Some Atlanta treatment clients report that they used OxyContin, Vicodin, and Dilaudid before moving to heroin.³⁴ The use of methamphetamine-OxyContin combinations has been reported in the Atlanta area. OxyContin sells for \$1 per milligram. Hydrocodone and similar opiates sell for \$5-\$10. Hydromorphone (Dilaudid) pills are more expensive, selling for \$40-\$80 per pill. Some heroin users prefer prescription opiates because they are “cleaner” and price and purity are consistent.³⁵

Enforcement

➤ As of October 31, 2001, there were 2,039 full-time law enforcement employees in Atlanta (1,510 officers and 529 civilians).³⁶

➤ Red Dog Unit³⁷

An initiative of the Atlanta Police Department, the Red Dog Unit is made up of personnel who provide a high profile and aggressive presence in areas of the city that have high levels of street drug sales, drug use, and drug-related crime.

Trafficking and Seizures

- Atlanta has emerged as a major drug transportation hub for the southeastern region of the U.S.³⁸
- Atlanta is Georgia's source of supply for Mexican-controlled methamphetamine. The methamphetamine typically arrives in the city from Mexico, California, or Texas.³⁹
- Atlanta is frequently used as a transit city for MDMA originating in Europe and destined for other cities in the U.S.⁴⁰
- Most of the LSD found in Atlanta is mailed from the western United States.⁴¹
- The primary retail distribution center for heroin in Atlanta is the Vine City/The Bluff area of the city.⁴²
- Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport is the nation's largest in terms of air cargo and passenger volume.⁴³
- In 2000, 113.3 kilograms of cocaine were apprehended at Hartsfield Airport. This is more than double the amount of cocaine seized at the Airport in 1999.⁴⁴
- Approximately 39 kilograms of heroin were seized at Hartsfield Airport in 2000, four times the amount seized in 1999.⁴⁵

Courts

- Drug Courts⁴⁶
As of May 2003, there was one drug court in Atlanta that had been operating for over two years and one additional drug court that was being planned.

Corrections

- On May 15, 2003, approximately 9% (4,046) of the statewide active prisoners within Georgia Department of Corrections facilities (excluding jails) were convicted within the Atlanta Circuit.⁴⁷
- On May 15, 2003, approximately 7% (8,400) of the active probationers in Georgia were convicted within the Atlanta Circuit. More than 10,000 probationers, representing 8% of the statewide probation total, were being supervised in the Atlanta Circuit.⁴⁸

Consequences of Use

- Approximately 18% of the Atlanta area AIDS cases are directly related to injection drug use.⁴⁹
- Preliminary data indicate that there were 6,537 drug abuse episodes reported to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) by emergency departments (ED) in Atlanta from January to June 2002. During full year 2001, there were 14,456 drug abuse episodes reported in Atlanta.⁵⁰
- Cocaine was mentioned more than 4,000 times in the ED drug-related episodes from January to June 2002. It was mentioned in nearly 9,000 of the episodes during full year 2001.⁵¹

Number of ED Drug Mentions, Selected Drugs, Atlanta, 1998-June 2002*

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002*
Alcohol-in-combination	4,660	4,952	6,436	6,878	3,192
Cocaine	5,980	5,236	6,229	8,891	4,036
Heroin	473	415	485	848	337
Marijuana	2,633	2,515	2,431	3,486	1,910
Amphetamines	295	--	--	365	297
Methamphetamine	162	83	109	172	93
MDMA (Ecstasy)	33	62	68	175	66
Ketamine	4	13	--	4	6
LSD	108	85	70	80	10
PCP	--	28	--	35	--
Miscellaneous hallucinogens	12	5	7	--	7
Flunitrazepam	--	5	--	2	0
GHB	80	142	129	84	27
Inhalants	21	18	22	20	3
Combin. not found above	2	--	--	--	0
Total ED drug abuse episodes	10,717	10,189	11,112	14,456	6,537
Total ED drug mentions	20,167	19,480	21,939	27,254	12,649

* 2002 data are preliminary and only for January to June

- During 2001, there were 131 drug-related deaths reported to DAWN by Medical Examiners (ME) in Fulton County. Cocaine was mentioned in 95 of the drug abuse deaths.⁵²

Number of ME Drug Mentions, Atlanta (Fulton County), 1997-2001

Drug Type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Alcohol-in-combination	18	49	33	30	36
Cocaine	41	103	121	89	95
Heroin/morphine	19	26	25	11	4
Marijuana	4	8	8	7	11
Amphetamines	--	--	3	2	1
Methamphetamine	--	--	1	1	--
Club drugs	--	--	4	1	1
Hallucinogens	1	--	2	--	--
Inhalants	--	1	--	--	--
Narcotic analgesics	11	16	23	51	43
Other analgesics	1	5	2	2	--
Benzodiazepines	3	9	13	12	11
Antidepressants	8	10	7	7	5
All other substances	17	20	20	24	2
Total drug deaths	58	125	158	114	131
Total drug mentions	123	247	262	237	209

Treatment

- Approximately 25% of Atlanta adult male arrestees interviewed during 2002 reported that they have received inpatient/residential treatment at some point in their lives.⁵³

Adult Male Arrestee Drug or Alcohol Treatment Status, Atlanta, 2002

Type of Treatment	Percent
Outpatient	
Ever	13.1%
Past year	1.4
Inpatient/residential	
Ever	24.8
Past year	6.6

- Of those admitted to treatment in Atlanta during 2001, 68% were admitted for primary abuse of cocaine and 2.4% were admitted for primary use of methamphetamine.⁵⁴
- From January to June 2001, approximately 7% of those admitted to treatment in Atlanta were being treated for primary abuse of heroin. The proportion of treatment clients reporting marijuana as their primary drug rose to slightly over 16% in the first half of 2001. This is up from 15% in 2000 but down from 21% in 1999.⁵⁵
- The proportion of clients reporting primary use of stimulants has remained stable, declining from 1.7% in 1999 to 1.5% in 2000, and rising to 1.6% in the first half of 2001.⁵⁶
- During the second half of 2000, approximately 61% of those admitted to public drug treatment programs in Atlanta reported cocaine as their primary drug of abuse.⁵⁷

Primary Drug of Abuse Among Public Treatment Admissions, Atlanta, 1997-2000

Year	Cocaine	Marijuana	Heroin	Stimulants
1H 1997	57.4	15.2	4.3	1.7
2H 1997	57.5	14.8	5.2	1.9
1H 1998	56.9	15.5	5.9	2.0
2H 1998	60.2	15.3	5.8	1.7
1H 1999	51.8	20.3	4.1	1.7
2H 1999	51.1	24.9	1.9	1.7
1H 2000	56.0	17.5	6.6	1.3
2H 2000	60.5	14.7	6.6	1.6

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² Atlanta Mayor's Web site: <http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/deptmayor/default.html>

³ Atlanta City Council Web site: <http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/citycoul/COUNCIL.HTM>

⁴ Atlanta Police Department Web site: <http://atlantapd.org/>

⁵ Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Points of Contact section: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/frames_contact.html

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- ⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area section: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/frames_atla.html
- ⁷ Fulton County Department of Human Services, Call to Manhood Program: http://www.co.fulton.ga.us/services/services_detail_T27_R90.html
- ⁸ Unity Project Web site: <http://www.macad.org/unity/index.html>
- ⁹ Drug-Free Communities Support Program Web site, Georgia section: <http://ojidp.ncjrs.org/dfcs/states/ga.html>
- ¹⁰ Executive Office for Weed and Seed Data Center, Georgia section: <http://www.weedandseeddatacenter.org/map.aspx?state=GA>
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- ¹⁷ Atlanta Police Department, Monthly Crime Comparison, December 2002: <http://atlantapd.org/ucr/Web%20UCR%20Reports/December2002/December2002.pdf>
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- ²¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse: Volume II*, June 2002: http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/CEWG/Vol2_602.pdf
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